



Mentoring

A Program for Returning Men and Women from Incarceration to The Community as Law Abiding and Productive Citizens.



Harford County Christian Jail Ministry, Inc.
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The Harford County Christian Jail Ministry (HCCJM) is incorporated in the State of Maryland as a nonprofit tax-exempt organization. It is not the intention of HCCJM to be a guardian of prisoner rights nor are we interested in reforming the institution or penal system. We seek, by the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to reform the lives of men and women during and after incarceration. Statistics show that those persons released from incarceration have a seventy to eighty percent chance of recidivism. Basically, the reason for this high rate of return is that incarceration does little to affect the values of the individual or provide life skills necessary to change the individual's situation. Typically, the person returns to the same environment, friends and habits that led to the incarceration.

On the positive side, incarceration has benefits that enhance the recovery process. First, it provides a substance free environment where inmates are temporarily freed from the affects of drug and alcohol dependency allowing them to think more clearly. Secondly, the catharsis of incarceration induces many of them to re-examine their lives and recognize the need to make changes to their lifestyle. Fortunately, many of them are able to recognize the error in their ways and realize that the truth of God's word can lead them to the virtues they need. They are prepared to make sincere commitments in following the teachings of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, upon leaving institutional life and returning to their former environment, the judicial obligations and worldly concerns quickly overwhelm them, quenching their spiritual zeal.

Mentoring programs have been shown to be effective in helping men and women make the transition back into the community while holding onto their former commitment to lifestyle reform. The first six weeks after incarceration are a crucial time when trained mentors can provide valuable assistance, encouraging the client, planning for work and living space, and working with other factors to solidify the restoration process.

A cadre of trained volunteers administer this aftercare program. Although community resources are sought and often used, there is no direct expense to the County Government for the mentoring process. In fact, there is a substantial savings for each redeemed individual that does not return to incarceration.

VISION AND PURPOSE

This program is a tool for the restoration of men and women to the community following incarceration, helping them to become law-abiding citizens able to contribute to the welfare of society and the Kingdom of God. This purpose is dependent upon mentors helping the individual client to participate in a local Christian church, follow through with goals they have set for themselves, and connect with resources in the community that can support them in reaching these goals.

SCOPE

The HCCJM aftercare activities described herein should begin not less than 6 weeks prior to the end of the incarceration and continue a minimum of 12 weeks after. Mentoring alone does not constitute a reentry process but is the integral coordinating element of other community resources, organizations, ministries and churches that help provide for both physical and spiritual needs of the individual and their family. It is essential to have reentry elements to provide for health care, housing, employment, transportation and funding to support reentry. **The key to re-entry and mentoring is the presence of effective programs within the detention center that first lead the inmate into an organized effort resulting in a life changing commitment.**

In some cases, the protegee may not be released, but will be remanded to the Department of Corrections, or leave incarceration to reside outside the reach of the mentor. When this is anticipated, the mentor may arrange for further mentoring in the new venue. Ultimately, the intention should be to help the protegee find the way to recovery by transformation of the thought

process, taking personal inventory, and deciding on a plan of action in the future. Connection with a church is essential in any case.

TRAINING

Mentors are recruited and managed by Non-Governmental Organizations, in this case, HCCJM. They are provided with specific training to help them to understand clientele problems and be able to implement effective mentoring and spiritual direction. Each mentor will have their background checked and will be provided appropriate training by the institutional chaplain and staff to assure compliance with rules and security procedures. The mentor will be expected to sign a covenant agreement regarding personal integrity.

GENERAL

This program of spiritual care-giving requires cooperation and communication between all parties involved with the client during and following incarceration, both professional and volunteer. Specific efforts during incarceration may involve: distribution and review of aftercare applications, access to the institution for mentors to meet with clients, and information from the institution regarding the time of client's release.

IDENTIFICATION

HCCJM has contact with inmates through the conduct of the Overcomers in Christ program, church services, and the 33 Series of Authentic Manhood. These and other programs lead the inmates through studies dealing with overcoming life's difficulties, especially as related to addictive behavior. The leaders of the programs have ample opportunity to develop rapport with participants, recognizing and challenging them to engage with a mentor at the appropriate time. Other programs such as AA and GED should also be a source of applications and the assignment of individual supporting mentors.

PREPARATION

In addition to the client making the decision to a lifestyle change, programs are needed within the detention center and in the community to assist that effort. Resources in the detention center must be available for employment applications and training in finances, employment and family dynamics.

REFERRAL/NOMINATION

The first element of mentoring is carried out within the institution, (The Harford County Detention Center). An individual desiring aftercare may request a Mentoring Application form. (Fig. 1) The form should be completed and turned in to the Detention Center Chaplain or Designee for review and processing. This should be completed at least eight weeks prior to expected release to allow time for processing, assignment of a mentor, and for the first meeting with the mentor.

QUALIFICATION

Approval of the application is to be based on the following conditions:

1. The nominee recognizes the need to reform his/her lifestyle.
2. The nominee is sincerely committed to a program of aftercare prior to and following release.
3. The nominee must be in good standing with the Detention Center as determined by the Classification counselor and must abide by the institutional rules.

MENTOR

The mentor will begin by assuring the "Free at Last" devotional guide has been received by the inmate. This book was prepared and directed specifically at inmates who are working with a mentor during the transition to society. It is 12 weeks of daily devotions to change the habits and thoughts of the protegee. Questions follow each daily devotion helping the protegee understand the

lesson. Many of the questions lead into a discussion with the mentor to answer questions and clarify the lesson.

The mentor will often serve as a sounding board for the client as he/she seeks to work through problems. When appropriate, counsel, encouragement and advice will be offered from a Christian perspective, using scripture reference for support. The mentor will serve as a counselor to which the client will be accountable. They will pray together and share the word of God. The mentor will encourage church involvement of the client as a top priority. Together they will develop a plan for independent living. The client will be assisted in finding help from community organizations and resources. If the client does not expect to have housing following release, they will be directed to one of the transitional houses. If the client takes up residence with a family member, they will be encouraged to adapt House Rules such as those presented on the home page of www.hccjm.com. The mentor must connect the client with a church or local support group that will be able to provide continued direction and assistance to the client, transitioning the aftercare process away from the mentor into the hands of others. Once established the mentor will reduce contact and the client will be deemed rehabilitated.

REPORTING

The mentor will be accountable for reporting progress with the client. Metrics will be developed to determine the efficacy of the reentry process and make revisions as deemed appropriate.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Personal matters discussed between the mentor and the client will be considered confidential except where such information that may affect the safety and welfare of the institution or other persons. The mentor and protégé are expected to abide by all rules of the Detention Center and the laws of the State of Maryland, including court orders, probationary requirements, driver licensing, and auto registration.

Harford County Mentoring

Request for Spiritual Mentor

(Return to Chaplains Office with a 129 request)

The purpose of mentoring is to provide spiritual support to you during transition from incarceration back to the community. Mentoring meetings are last approximately 40-60 minutes weekly and are scheduled by you and your mentor. Your mentor will help by answering questions with advice and guidance while you develop personal goals. You will be supported to the extent possible in finding community resources, housing, transportation, a job, and participation in the church of your choice.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

ID #: _____ **Housing Unit:** _____ **Age:** _____ **Sex:** _____

Children: Number of Children: _____

If on work release, what days and times that you work: _____

Best days and times to meet with your mentor: _____

Expected date of release if known: _____

Home address: _____ **Phone:** _____

City/State: _____ **Zip:** _____

Will you have a job after being released? _____

What skills do you have or what work have you done? _____

Church preference: _____

Please check programs in which you have or are participating.

[] Overcomers [] 33 Series [] Church service

Do you have the name of a preferred Mentor? _____

What are your expectations for mentoring?

Signature of Applicant: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Associated ministry group or person: _____

Mentor Assignment: _____ **Date:** _____

Comments: _____